

**FALSE WITNESS: THE
AUTHORIZED
TRANSLATION OF
"KLOKKE ROLAND"**

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False witness: the authorized translation of "Klokke Roland" by Johannes Jörgensen

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JOHANNES JÖRGENSEN

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"KLOKKE ROLAND"

BY

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FALSE WITNESS

“ Klokke Roland bin ick genandt
Als ick kleppe, dan ist brand,
Als ick heyde, ist victorie in Vleenderland ! ”

“ Bell Roland is my name,
When I ring it is for Fire,
And when I chime it is for Victory
In Flanders.”

THIS legend was written in old days on the great bell in the belfry of Ghent. The bell exists no longer, the tower alone still stands in the middle of the public street a few steps from the splendid cathedral St. Bavon, where the Van Eycks' "Adoration of the Lamb" hangs in one of the side chapels. I remember my first visit to Ghent, and to St. Bavon. The discreet sacristan who shut me into the chapel whispered : " I will come again in a half-hour," and left me alone

with the two brothers' immortal picture; St. Bavon, which I have seen since then so many times—Ghent where, through many years, I found such good and faithful friends. But perhaps best of all I remember the old Gothic church in the suburb of Akkerghem on the Boulevard des Hospices. A bird sang every morning in the trees outside the window of the house where I lived with Henri Dien Sageman. It sang strange, heartrending notes in the first chill and motionless twilight of the quiet early summer morning, which made one think of things far away—the lighthouse of Skagen¹ as it stands twinkling ceaselessly through the clear golden night, the white birch stems, and the lichen-covered rocks of Omberg on the coast of Vetter, or of Fyris on a bright spring day in March when the soft

¹ Skagen, the north-westerly point of Jutland, is a place much frequented by Danish artists and writers. Omberg, a wooded mountain on the shores of Lake Vetter, is one of the most beautiful places in Sweden. Fyris is a wide plain stretching around Upsala, which was the centre of the history of Sweden in pagan days and the Middle Ages (Translator's note).